

Whitman, Walt

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Poets

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Lincoln Poetry

Poets

Walt Whitman

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Whitman, Walt

This Dust Was Once the Man

"This dust was once
the man,"

"his dust was once the man,
Gentle, plain and resolute - under whose cautious hand,
Against the foulest crime in history known in any land or age,
Was savēd the Union of these states.

O CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN!

By Walt Whitman.

O CAPTAIN! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won,

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths—for you the shores a-

crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here, Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head!

It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!

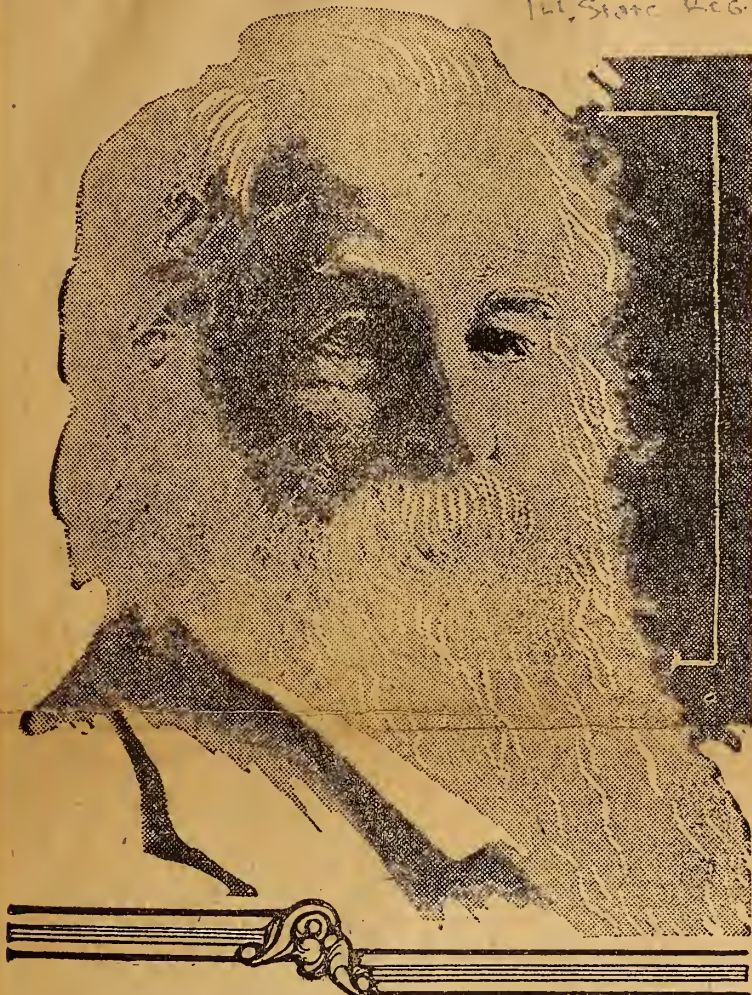
But I, with mournful tread,

Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

—Lines on the Death of Lincoln.



Centenary of Walt Whitman, America's Nature Poet, This Month Will Be Observed Throughout the United States



WALT WHITMAN.

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

O Captain! My Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores acrowding.
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Hear Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer me, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

~~Exult O shores, and ring O bells!~~

But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck: my Captain lies,
Fallen, cold and dead.

"O Captain! My Captain!" which is one of Walt Whitman's best known poems, was inspired by the assassination of President Lincoln. Whitman served during the Civil war as an army nurse and his experiences and patriotism are recorded in his volume, "Walt Whitman's Drum-Taps." He was a staunch supporter of Lincoln and lectured in New York, Boston and other cities on the anniversary of Lincoln's death.

Walt Whitman, Poet and Patriot 1819-1919

BY HENRY B. RANKIN
(Author of Personal Recollections of Lincoln)

One hundred years has elapsed since the birth of the quaint and lovable "Walt." He came of Netherland stock, so he has told us in his own peculiar vernacular. He was born on Long Island, New York, May 31, 1819. His father and mother before him, and theirs before them, had been born there, and Whitman as a lad and young man had spent all his earlier years in and about Brooklyn and New York.

On the maternal side, the Van Velsor family had lived at Cold Springs, Long Island, as he tells us, on their own farm on the eastern edge of Queens county since the latter part of the seventeenth century. On his father's side, his "was the fifth generation from the English arrivals in New England," and they were also farmers on their own land, which he described as "five hundred acres at West Hills, Suffolk county, all good sod, gently sloping east and south." With this background of American ancestry, and its vicinage so near our greatest American city, as it existed in 1819, it is not remarkable

by the peculiar charm and strength of Whitman's exclusive personality and the charm of his prose and his poetry. I do not consider it is called for, or proper, on this his first centennial to cite his critics, or quote their criticisms. Whitman was so many sided, so cosmopolitan in nearly all ways, that it is not possible in the brief limits of a daily paper to sketch any but the briefest mention of his character, or trace the operation of the influences, internal and external, that contributed to his character development, or ability as a poet.

WHITMAN'S THREE YEARS HOSPITAL WORK

His temperamental traits ruled his life; His splendid optimism glows and pulsates through every line he has written. It was his benign faith in his fellow men, such unusual sympathy with all races and conditions of men and women, that brought him to Washington in 1862 and gave him those most remarkable experiences he secured and lived in by his ministrations in the hospitals there during our Civil War from 1862 to 1865. Lincoln had given Whitman by special executive order fullest hospital privileges at all hours. He thereafter gave his days and nights—his personal self for three years to the sufferers, ministering intimately with more than an hundred thousand sick and wounded soldiers. Surgeons say his mere presence was an anaesthetic, calming and soothing as he went

and never lay it down without reading aloud such verses or pages as he fancied. His estimate of the poetry differed from any brought out in the office discussions. He foretold correctly the place the future would assign to Whitman's poems, and that "Leaves of Grass" would be followed by other and greater work. A few years later, immediately following the tragedy of Lincoln's assassination, Whitman wrote that immortal elegy "O Captain! My Captain!" which became the nation's—aye, the world's—funeral dirge of our First American. When I first read this requiem its thrilling lines revived in my memory that quiet afternoon in the Springfield law office and Lincoln's first reading and comments on "Leaves of Grass." That scene was so vividly recalled then as to become more firmly fixed in my memory than any other of the incidents at the Lincoln & Herndon office, and this is my apology for giving space for rehearsing it so fully here.

WHITMAN'S FIRST GLIMPSE OF LINCOLN AND NEW YORK'S COLD RECEPTION

I will collect from Whitman's diary, condensed extracts of Whitman's accounts of seeing and meeting Lincoln under a variety of surroundings and diverse events.

Whitman says: "I shall not easily forget the first time I ever saw Abraham Lincoln. It must have been about the 23rd or 24th of Feb-

lodgings out of town. I saw him this morning about eight coming in to business, riding on Vermont avenue, near L street. He always has a company of twenty-five or thirty cavalry, with sabres drawn and held upright over their shoulders. They say this guard was against his personal wish, but he let his counselors have their way. The party makes no great show in uniform or horses. Mr. Lincoln on the saddle generally rides a good-sized, easy-going gray horse, is dressed in plain black, somewhat rusty and dusty, wears a black stiff hat, and looks about as ordinary in attire, etc., as the commonest man.

"I see very plainly Abraham Lincoln's dark brown face, with the deep-cut lines, the eyes, always to me with a deep latent sadness in the expression. We have got so that we exchange bows and very cordial ones.

"Earlier in the summer I occasionally saw the president and his wife, toward the latter part of the afternoon, out in a barouche, on a pleasant ride through the city. Mrs. Lincoln was dressed in complete black, with a long crape veil. The equipage is of the plainest kind, only two horses and they nothing extra. They passed me once very close, and I saw the president in the face fully, as they were moving slowly, and his look, though abstracted, happened to be directed steadily in my eye. He bowed and smiled, but far beneath his smile I noticed well the

able to understand the thorough Americanism of Walt Whitman and the many-sided quality of his literary work.

CONFLICTING ESTIMATES OF WHITMAN'S GENIUS

In any study of the personality of Whitman and his literary work at the close of this first century since his birth, one is met by an unusual type of comment, both by his contemporaries and the criticisms and commendations of the literary world and the general readers, also. With these are to be associated the equally contradictory incongruity and unconventional diction in some of the writings of the poet himself. To some he is a nineteenth century divinity, the master poet of a new cult—a very master of the modern school of social and poetical democracy. To others, a colloquial spokesman of the lower classes, who delights in coarseness and dissipation.

It is probably true that Whitman knew himself in a more practical way and came nearer nature and all human life than most poets can claim to have done. Take this estimate he makes of himself: "I charge you forever reject those who would expound me, for I cannot expound myself.... Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself. (I am large—I contain multitudes)."

WALT WHITMAN'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Of his personal appearance, up to the close of his activities in hospital work during the Civil war, there is no difference of opinion. President Lincoln, standing one day during the war before a window in the White House, saw Whitman 'slowly saunter by. He followed him with his eyes, relates Mr. Burroughs, and, turning, said to those about him:

"Well, he looks like a man."

Mr. Burroughs tells us further in his vivid and sympathetic description: "In person Whitman was large and tall, above six feet, with a breezy, open-air look, but the full beauty of his face and head did not appear till he was past sixty. After that I have noticed that it was the finest head this age or country has seen.... It seemed to me his face steadily refined and strengthened with age." An eminent English author, Binns, says of him on their first meeting that he was "almost amazed at the beauty and majesty of his person and the gracious air of purity that surrounded and permeated him—A sort of spiritual intoxication set in."

But the better and more impressive personal description is made by Whitman. Thus he draws himself:

"A rude child of the people!—no imitation—no foreigner—no dilettante democrat.... likes to be called by his given name, and nobody at all need mister him—can laugh with laughter—and weep with sorrow and pain—is not prejudiced one mite against the Irish—talks readily with niggers—does not make a stand on being a gentleman, nor on learning nor manners—would leave a select soiree of elegant people any time to go with tumultuous men, roughs, receive their caresses and welcome, listen to their noise, oaths, smut, fluency, laughter, repartee. The effects he produces in his poems are no effects of artists. You may feel the unconscious teachings of a fine brute, but will never feel the artificial teaching of a fine writer or speaker."

His enthusiastic friends do not take him thus seriously, for at the same time they appreciate Whitman's finer qualities. They see in him above all his peculiarities the seer of inspired poetry and prophetic vision. Mrs. Gleichrist, a woman of wide culture, became the intimate friend and admirer of Whitman and saw in him remarkable power. He drew such diverse men as Thoreau, Emerson, Ingersoll, Trowbridge, Andrew Carnegie, —all these men, and many others equally diverse, were drawn to him

among the suffering soldiers who learned to call for "Walt" in their supremest sufferings, asking for him to hold their hands, and steady them in last moments as they passed through their final great adventure. He loved to have them call him "Walt." In his poem "The Wound Dresser" he tells the story of some of those terrible days and nights in the thirty to forty hospitals in Washington he lived among for three years. He kept, intermittingly, a diary during this period of service. It is at once poem, tragedy and a requiem of death. He always afterwards recalled these services as giving him the greatest satisfaction his life had ever found.

As typical of this strange magnetic power, he had over those who met him, I will quote with abbreviations, William Dean Howells's account of the influence Whitman had over him:

"He had a fine head with a cloud of Jovian hair . . . and gentle eyes that looked most kindly into mine and seemed to wish the liking which I instantly gave him . . . Our acquaintance was summed up in that glance and the grasp of his mighty fist upon my hand . . . Some years later I saw him for the last time . . . Then, as always, he gave me the sense of a sweet and true soul, and I felt in him a spiritual dignity which I will not try to reconcile with the printing of . . . Emerson's letter. The apostle of the rough, the uncouth, was the gentlest person; his barbaric yawn translated into terms of social encounter was an address of singular quiet . . . He was a liberating force, a very imperial anarchy in literature . . . I like his prose; there is a genial and comforting quality, very rich and cordial, such as I felt him to be when I met him in person . . . It is still something neighborly, brotherly, fatherly, and so I felt him to be when the benign old man looked on me and helpfully spoke to me."

LINCOLN'S FIRST READING OF WHITMAN'S POEMS

I ask you to go with me to an event in the law office of Lincoln & Herndon, at Springfield, Illinois—now more than sixty years ago—for an account of Abraham Lincoln's first reading, and his estimate then, of Walt Whitman's first volume of poetry. His "Leaves of Grass" in its first edition of 1855 was not creditable to its publishers as a piece of book making, having errors of type, spelling and not a few loose terms. A copy of it had been placed on the office table by Herndon. It had been read by several of us, and, one day, discussions hot and extreme had sprung up between office students and Mr. Herndon concerning its poetic merit, in which Dr. Bateman, Illinois State Superintendent of Schools, engaged with us, having entered from his adjoining office. Later, quite a surprise occurred when we found that the Whitman poetry and our discussions had been engaging Lincoln's silent attention. After the rest of us had finished our criticisms of some peculiar verses, and of Whitman in general, as well as of each other's literary taste and morals in particular, and had resumed our usual duties or had departed, Lincoln, who during the criticisms had been apparently in the unapproachable depths of one of his glum moods of meditative silence, took up "Leaves of Grass" for his first reading of it. After half an hour or more devoted to it he turned back to the first pages and, to our general surprise, began to read aloud. Other office work was discontinued by us all while he read with sympathetic emphasis verse after verse, commenting from time to time on some. At his request, the book was left by Herndon on the office table. Time and again when Lincoln came in, or was leaving, he would pick it up as if to glance at it for only a moment, but instead he would often settle down in a chair

ruary, 1861. Two or three shabby hack barouches made their way with some difficulty through the crowded streets of New York and drew up at the Astor house entrance. A tall figure stepped out of the center of these barouches and paused leisurely on the sidewalk.

"There were no speeches—no compliments—no welcome—as far as I could hear, not a word said. Still much anxiety was concealed in that quiet. Cautious persons had feared some marked insult or indignity to the president-elect—for he possessed no personal popularity at all in New York city and very little political. The result was a sulk, unbroken silence, such as certainly never before characterized so great a New York crowd.

"Almost in the same neighborhood I distinctly remembered seeing Lafayette on his visit to America in 1825. I had personally seen and heard, various years afterward, how Andrew Jackson, Clay, Webster, Hungarian Kossuth, Fillbuster Walker, the Prince of Wales on his visit, and other celebrities, native and foreign, had been welcomed there—all that indescribable human roar and magnetism, unlike any other sound in the universe—the glad exulting thunder-shouts of countless unloosed throats of men! But on this occasion, not a voice—not a sound. From the top of an omnibus, driven up one side, close by, and blocked by the curbstone and the crowds, I had a capital view of it all, and especially of Mr. Lincoln, his look and gait—his perfect composure and coolness—his unusual and uncouth height, his dress of complete black, stovepipe hat pushed back on the head, dark brown complexion, seamed and wrinkled, yet canny-looking face, black, bushy head of hair, disproportionately long neck, and his hands held behind as he stood observing the people. He looked with curiosity upon that immense sea of faces, and the sea of faces returned the look with similar curiosity. In both there was a dash of comedy, without farce, such as Shakespeare puts in his blackest tragedies. The crowd that hemmed around consisted, I should think, of thirty to forty thousand men, not a single one his personal friend—while I have no doubt (so frenzied were the ferments of the time) many an assassin's knife and pistol lurked in hip or breast pocket there, ready, soon as break or riot came.

THE FIRST AND SECOND INAUGURATION OF LINCOLN

"March 4, 1865—At the inauguration four years ago, Lincoln rode down and back again surrounded by a dense mass of armed cavalry—men eight deep, with drawn sabres; and there were sharpshooters stationed at every corner on the route. At this second inauguration the president very quietly rode down to the capitol in his own carriage, by himself, on a sharp trot, about noon. I saw him on his return, at 3 o'clock after the performance was over. He was in his plain two-horse barouche, and looked very much worn and tired; the lines, indeed, of vast responsibilities, intricate questions, and demands of life and death, out deeper than ever upon his dark brown face; yet all the old goodness, tenderness, sadness and canny shrewdness, underneath the furrows. I never see that man without feeling that he is one to become personally attached to, for his combination of purest, heartiest tenderness and native western form of manliness. By his side sat his little boy of ten years. There were no soldiers, only a lot of civilians on horse-back, with huge yellow scarfs over their shoulders, riding around the carriage.

OFTEN MEETS PRESIDENT LINCOLN IN STREETS

"August 12th—I see the president almost every day, as I happen to live where he passes to or from his

expression I have alluded to.

NO GOOD PORTRAIT OF LINCOLN

"None of the artists of photo-pictures have caught the deep, though subtle and indirect expression of this man's face. There is something else there. One of the great portrait painters of two or three centuries ago is needed. As it is impossible to depict a wild perfume or fruit-taste, or a passionate tone of the living voice—such was Lincoln's face, the peculiar color, the lines of it, the eyes, mouth, expression. Of technical beauty it had nothing—but to the eye of a great artist it furnished a rare study, a feast and a fascination. The current portraits are all failures—most of them caricatures.

ASSASSINATION OF LINCOLN

"April 16, '65—Of all the days of the war, there are two especially I can never forget. Those were the days following the news, in New York and Brooklyn, of that first Bull Run defeat and the day of Abraham Lincoln's death. I was home in Brooklyn on both occasions. The day of the murder we heard the news very early in the morning. Mother prepared breakfast—and other meals afterward—as usual; but not a mouthful was eaten all day by either of us. We each drank half a cup of coffee; that was all. Little was said. We got every newspaper, morning and evening, and the frequent extras of that period, and passed them silently to each other.

"I find in my notes of the time this passage on the death of Abraham Lincoln: He leaves for America's history and biography, so far, not only its most dramatic reminiscence—he leaves, in my opinion, the greatest, best, most characteristic, artistic, moral personality. Not but that he had faults and showed them in the presidency; but honesty, goodness, shrewdness, conscience, and (a new virtue, unknown to other lands and hardly yet really known here, but the foundation and tie of all, as the future will grandly develop) Unionism in its truest and simplest sense formed the hardpan of his character. These he sealed with his life. The tragic splendor of his death purging, illuminating all, throws round his form, his head, an aureole that will remain and will grow brighter through time, while history lives, and love of country lasts. By many has this Union been helped; but if one name, one man, must be picked out, he, most of all, is the conservator of it, to the future. He was assassinated—but the Union is not assassinated—causal One falls and another falls. The soldier drops, sinks like a wave—but the ranks of the ocean eternally press on. Death does its work, obliterates a hundred, a thousand—President, General, Captain, Private—but the Nation is immortal."

WHITMAN'S POSITION IN OUR HISTORY

The century spanning from the birth of Walt Whitman was one replete with the personality and achievements of many great and good men and women. On a roll call of those who have thus wrought with exceptional success in poetry and patriotic service for our country in the eventful century now closing and whose names will remain in both history and song as a priceless heritage of America, few will be brighter, and none more lovable, than that of the "good grey poet"—Walt Whitman. This was his slogan all his life and these lines the call he left for us—these the lines I heard read for the first time by the lips of Abraham Lincoln. They are voiceful as ever. Hear them!

"My comrade,
For you to share with me two
greatnesses,—a third one rising
inclusive and more resplendent.
The greatness of Love and Democracy
and the greatness of Religion."

OUR POEM for Today

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

(Written by Walt Whitman on the death of Abraham Lincoln.)

O Captain! my Captain! our fateful trip is done,

The ship has weathered every rank,
the prize we sought is won.

The port is near, the bells I hear,
the people all exulting,

While follow eyes the steady keel,
the vessel grim and daring;

But, oh, heart! heart! heart! oh, the
bleeding drops of red,

Where on the deck my captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and
hear the bells;

Rise up—for you the flag is flung—
for you the bugle thrills,

For you bouquets and ribboned
wreaths—for you the shores
a-crowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass,
their eager faces turning;

Here, Captain, dear father, this arm
beneath your head!

It is some dream that on the deck
you've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his
lips are pale and still,

My father does not feel my arm, he
has no pulse, nor will,

The ship is anchored safe and sound,
its voyage closed and done,

From fearful trip the victor ship
comes in with object won;

Exult, O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,

Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.



WHITMAN'S "BATCH LEFT TO OBLIVION"

Uncollected Poetry and
Prose, Mediocre in Quali-
ty, is Biographically Valua-
ble *Springfield Republican*

Walt Whitman "stands out like a mountain, big, solid, and craggy." But about every mountain there is fallen timber, underbrush, slides of broken and weather-crumbled rocks and accumulations of other debris. To all this we shut our eyes—all of us, that is, except the geologist and the botanist. We had rather think of the mountain than of the litter; but the scientist is compelled at least to rake over and poke among the litter to make certain that he understands the mountain.

So the literary scientists have to rake over and poke among the debris of this cragged, rugged, "faulted" literary monument. It is a tedious, thankless task imposed by the obligations of honest and thorough scholarship.

For the carrying through of one of these undertakings so barren of popular appreciation and so necessary to the establishment of historical accuracy concerning the makers of American literature, recognition is due Prof Emory Holloway, of Adelphi college. In the two volumes of "The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman" (Doubleday, Page & Co.), he has assembled a remarkable quantity of Whitman debris—debris that he himself characterizes in one of Whitman's phrases: "A vast batch left to oblivion." A tremendous amount of labor has been expended in hunting out this work of Whitman's from old newspapers and other sources, in documenting it, and in supplying references and cross references connecting it with the poet's better as well as better-known work.

Prof Holloway points out that our information concerning Whitman is incomplete and uncertain for the early part of his life—up to the time of the 1855 "Leaves of Grass"—and that Whitman himself may have thrown a larger amount of obscurity over this portion of his life than he those to cast around the later part. Though the materials now collected are not confined to this earlier period, they help to thin the shadow; and they represent the catch of a seine drawn far more widely than that of "The Gathering of the Vortices," in which the specimens are selections merely from Whitman's work in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle.

In addition, the biographical and critical introductions are so constructed as to afford direct help to the intimate study of Whitman's development and writing. Of Whitman's own writings in these volumes, however, one is compelled to acknowledge that they are mediocre to a degree; and one wonders how a man with so little flair for or apparent interest in journalistic work came to hang on so long in it.

Legend of Whitman's Love Affair

Prof Holloway had access to the collection of Whitman's notebooks which Mr Harned, the poet's executor, has sealed in the Library of

Congress and which have not previously been made public. In these 20 odd commonplace books Mr Holloway discovered evidence that gives a new interpretation to the poet's love story.

When Walt was 29 he was offered a position on the editorial staff of the New Orleans Crescent, as he and his young brother Jeff sailed down the Mississippi to the languorous southern city. They arrived in February and left suddenly toward the end of May. "Perhaps," says Leon Bazalgette, Whitman's French biographer, "the lady was the 'old dear friend' with the charming face, whose portrait was seen on the mantel of his room 40 years afterward, and of whom he was not inclined to speak, even to his relatives. I am inclined to think that she was a French woman. 'I walked much in that neighborhood,' he tells us in describing the French quarter—and that it was in her company that he learned the words borrowed from the language of France with which he has curiously sprinkled his writings. And perhaps the great lover was overcome, stirred to his very depth by this new complete love."

There is evidence to support this theory. There is the internal evidence of his poetry. Not until his return north did any of the poems of passion which indicate a deep emotional experience actually appear in "Leaves of Grass." Then, too, these lines seem to have a confessional value:—

Once I pass'd through a populous city imprinting my brain for future use with its shows, architecture, customs, traditions,

Yet now of all that city I remember only a woman I casually met there who detain'd me for love of me.

I remember, I say, only that woman who passionately clung to me.

Again we wander, we love, we separate again, Again she holds me by the hand, I must not go,

I see her close beside me with silent lips, sad and tremulous.

There is Whitman's own anonymous sketch in the Crescent, describing the charming lady whom he met at a masked ball. He loved her at first sight, but alas the lady was married. Francis Howard Wilson argued for the truth of this story later (Philadelphia Record, August 12, 1917) saying:—

"Walt was sensitive when people asked him why he never married. He talked pretty freely to me about his personal affairs. There was one woman whom he would have married had she been free; that was the married woman whom he met in his sojourn in New Orleans when a young man. Her husband knew of their love, too, I believe."

Legend False, but There Was a Love Affair

This is the legend, the love story that the years have built up around Walt Whitman's memory. But Prof Holloway, with a historian's zeal for the truth, shows upon what slender and misinterpreted evidence it rests. He discovered that the poem, "Once I

Passed Through a Populous City," was written and intended originally not for a love poem in "Children of Adam," but for "Calamus," a group of poems descriptive of attachment of man to man which Whitman preached as a complement of his gospel of individuality. Also, the verses of passion which were supposed to date from his New Orleans experience, and which did not appear in his book until his return from there, have been found dated a year earlier in one of the notebooks of the Harned collection. He also finds that "the dear old friend" whose picture was always with Whitman may well have been the woman whom the poet loved in Washington several years later.

That he was in love with a woman in Washington is certain. A passage in an article which Whitman's friend, Mrs William O'Connor, wrote for the Atlantic Monthly, but which for some reason was omitted from the published article, supplies the evidence. Thus Prof Holloway quotes: "He had met a certain lady, and by some mischance a letter revealing her friendship for him fell into her husband's hands, which made this gentleman very indignant and jealous, and thereupon, in the presence of his wife and another lady, he abused Walt. All that excited Walt's sympathy for the lady, over and above the admiration and affection he felt for her, so

WALT WHITMAN



Unfamiliar Photograph Enlarged From an Old Newspaper Clipping

[The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman," Edited by Prof Emory Holloway, Is Published by Doubleday, Page & Co]

that in telling about it he said, 'I would marry that woman tonight if she were free.' Correspondence was kept up between them for some time after that, and he was very strongly attracted to this lady. This is the only instance I have known where he was strongly attracted toward any woman in this way. It was this lady for whom he wrote the little poem in 'Children of Adam' beginning 'Out of the rolling ocean, the crowd,' etc.

"Describing this lady to me he said that she was quite fair, with brown hair and eyes, and rather plump and womanly and sweet and gentle, and he said that she bore herself with so much dignity and was so keenly hurt by what her husband said, that I think that drew her to him more. It was in '64."

In one of the notebooks those records of Walt's agitated and tumultuous inner life, are pages on which he counsels himself to be indifferent, to shut out thoughts of someone from his troubled mind. Whitman erased the loved one's name and wrote in his large irregular hand the number "13." On an opposite page is a picture of a winsome lady with the curls of 1860. Is she the one against whom he was trying to steel his heart?

Prof Holloway has cleared the mists about the New Orleans episode and has discovered another romance equally as intriguing. Yet the identity of the loved one remains a mystery.

*O Captain! My Captain!**(Walt Whitman's Tribute to Lincoln)*

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we
sought is won,

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people are
exulting,

While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim
and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,

Where on the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the
bugle trills,

For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths—for you the
shores acrowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager
faces turning;

Here Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head!

It is some dream that on the deck

You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and
still,

My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse
nor will,

The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage
closed and done,

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with
object won;

Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

But I, with mournful tread,

Walk the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.

N.Y. Evening Mail
2-12-23

PERFECT POEMS

The Tribune has been requested by many readers to continue publication of "Perfect Poems," altho the original list, taken from "Fifty Perfect Poems," compiled by Rossiter Johnson and Charles A. Dana, has been exhausted. Future poems will be selected from works of all writers whose poetry has survived the test of years.

O Captain! My Captain!

By WALT WHITMAN

(Written on the death of President Lincoln.)

O Captain! My Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
 But O heart! heart! heart!
 O the bleeding drops of red
 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
 Here, Captain! dear father!
 This arm beneath your head!
 Is it some dream that on the deck
 You've fallen cold and dead?

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
 Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
 But I with mourning tread
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

(From "Leaves of Grass"—Inclusive Edition. Copyright, 1926, Doubleday, Doran & Co.)

new paper 2-12-29

Lincoln!

Words are but puny things when one is called upon to review the life and work of the Immortal whose birthday we celebrate today.

It is a far cry from that dark hour when Abraham Lincoln was slain by the bullet of an assassin, but, even today, as we recall the story of the Great President's tragic taking-off when, with the war ended, he was working with full heart, great soul and all the strength of his wonderful mind to bind up the wounds left by the titanic struggle, our hearts respond to the plaintive lament of Walt Whitman's poem:

O Captain! my Captain! Our fearful trip is done;
The ship has weathered every wrack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,

While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring:

But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,

Where on the deck my captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung, for you the bugle trills;

For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths, for you the shores a-crowding;

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Here Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head;

It is some dream that on the deck

You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;

My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;

The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult, O shores! and ring O bells!

But I, with mournful tread,

Walk the deck my Captain lies

Fallen cold and dead.

Today the sons and grandsons of the gallant Boys in Gray will unite with the sons and grandsons of the brave Boys in Blue in heartfelt tribute to Lincoln, who paid with his precious life for keeping our beloved country one and indivisible.

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations;" — From Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address.

At the Tomb of Lincoln.

Fifty-seven years ago, when the tomb of ABRAHAM LINCOLN was dedicated at Springfield, many of those who heard the address of President GRANT were of a generation and age to understand "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed," with its:

"Coffin that passes through lanes
and streets,
Through day and night, with the
great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inlooped
flags, with the cities draped
in black,
With the show of the States
themselves as of crape-veiled
women standing,
With processions long and winding
and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit, with
the silent sea of faces and the
unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving
coffin, and the somber faces,
With dirges through the night,
with the thousand voices rising
strong and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the
dirges poured around the
coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the
shuddering organs — where
amid these you journey,
With the tolling, tolling bells'
perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac."

At the rededication of the tomb there was little that President HOOVER could say of LINCOLN that was new. "All that words can convey has long since been uttered by his grateful countrymen." The foundation of LINCOLN'S fame lies so deep and stands so strong that neither eulogy by a President nor dispraise by a biographer affects it. "The sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands" sleeps in the tomb at Springfield. Few among those who listened to President HOOVER were old enough to remember when the grief of a nation was sharp and pointed for a man but yesterday living, today dead. There is need, as the President said, to remember that LINCOLN was a man before he became a symbol. The tomb at Springfield, brought to fresh beauty by the pride of Illinois, is a call to the living to be dedicated to "the great task remaining before us."

NEW YORK CITY SUN
JUNE 18, 1931

Goodspeeds - Feb. 1937

'O the bleeding drops of red!

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

BY WALT WHITMAN.

I.

O CAPTAIN! my captain! our fearful trip is done
The ship has weathered every wrack, the prize we sought is won
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring.

But O heart! heart! heart!

~~I leave you not the little spot~~

Where on the deck my captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

II.

O captain! my captain! rise up and hear the bells
Rise up! for you the flag is flung, for you the bugle trills:
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths, for you the shores a-crowd-

ing:

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning.

O captain! dear father!

This arm ~~I push beneath you~~

It is some dream that on the deck

You've fallen cold and dead.

III.

My captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still:

My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will.

~~But the ship~~ The ship is anchored safe, its voyage closed and done:

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won!

Exult, O shores! and ring, O bells!

But I, with silent tread,

Walk the spot my captain lies

Fallen cold and dead.

With the author's corrections . . . page 190

CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR

ON February 9, 1888, Walt Whitman wrote from Camden to a Boston publisher these lines —

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for the little books, No. 32 "Riverside Literature Series" — Somehow you have got a couple of bad perversions in "O Captain", & I send you a corrected sheet.

WALT WHITMAN

The sheet which Whitman sent was torn, perhaps not too good-humoredly, from the little book itself. The poem, with its perversions and Whitman's corrections is shown on our front cover. On the blank back of the same leaf is written the note quoted above. It makes a nice little piece, as you'll agree, at \$45.

NEW ENGLAND ALBUM

INSERTED or mounted in an oblong, octavo, morocco-bound volume, which may, without stretching imagination, be called "A New England

Goodspeed

*HUSHED BE THE CAMPS TODAY.**(Written May 4, 1865.)*

Hushed be the camps today,
And, soldiers, let us drape our war-worn weapons,
and each with musing soul retire to celebrate
Our dear commander's death.

No more for him life's stormy conflicts,
Nor victory, nor defeat—no more time's dark
events,
Charging like ceaseless clouds across the sky.

But sing, poet, in our name
Sing of the love we bore him—because you,
dweller in camps,
Know it truly,

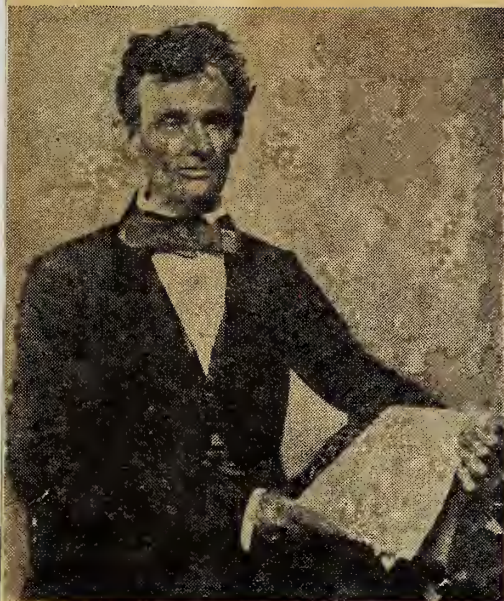
As they invault the coffin there,
Sing, as they close the doors of earth upon him,
one verse,
For the heavy hearts of soldiers—

*This dust was once the man,
Gentle, just and resolute, under whose cautious
hand,
Against the foulest crime in history known, in
any land or age,
Was saved the Union of these states!*

—Walt Whitman.

Revised by Tuller 7-12-91

POETRY



Lincoln in July, 1858

(Daguerreotype by P. von Schneider; from "Lincoln, His Life in Photographs," by Stefan Lorant)

WHEN the people of a country are aroused by one emotion, all the poet there is in each individual is likely to be stirred. This semester we are studying the effects of World War I on poets. For this reason, as well as for the fact that this is a Lincoln's Birthday issue, it is interesting to read the poetry written at another time of national crisis.

From the many poems about Lincoln by Walt Whitman, I am choosing passages from "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed."

"When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourned, and yet shall mourn with ever returning spring. . .

In the dooryard fronting an old farmhouse near the white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd from the ground, spotting the gray debris,
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless grass,

POETRY
ALBUM

★ ABRAHAM LINCOLN ★

Passing the yellow-speared wheat, every grain from its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin:

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,

Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crepe-veiled women standing,

With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,

With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn.

With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you journey,
With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac."

Lines which still have power to move us are found in the poem, "The Martyr," by Herman Melville, author of *Moby Dick*:

"Good Friday was the day
Of the prodigy and crime,
When they killed him in his pity,
When they killed him in his prime . . .
. . . they killed him in his kindness,
In their madness in their blindness,
And they killed him from behind . . .

There is sobbing of the strong,
And a pall upon the land;
But the People in their weeping
Bare the iron hand:
Beware the People weeping
When they bare the iron hand."

Another contemporary poet was Tom Taylor, English author of the play that

Lincoln was attending the night that he was assassinated. As a writer in *Punch* Taylor had often caricatured Lincoln. The lines of his recantation, from which the following stanzas are taken, still have the stirring power of real feeling:

"You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
You, who, with mocking pencil, went to trace,

Broad for the self-complaisant British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face,

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,

His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please;

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step as though the way were plain;

Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,
Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain—

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,

Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scurrile jester, is there room for you?

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil and confute my pen;

To make me own this hind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men . . .

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame.

Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high!
Sad life, cut short as its triumph came!"

¹ From *Leaves of Grass*, by Walt Whitman. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday, Doran and Company.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch
February 12, 1958

'O Captain! My Captain!'

Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1865

By Walt Whitman

O Captain! My Captain! our fearful
3 trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack,
the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the
people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the
vessel grim and daring;
1 But O heart! heart! heart!
2 O the bleeding drops of red,
1 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
2 Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! My Captain! rise up and
hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—
for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribboned
wreaths—for you the shores
a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass,
their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This are beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips
are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he
has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchored and sound,
its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip, the victor ship
comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

A Critic and His Characters

Alfred Kazin looks upon the eminent authors in his major new work as "characters" unfolding in a story that he has been thinking and writing about for nearly a half-century. From Emerson to Eliot, from Hawthorne to Hemingway, he has lived with them on the printed page and even known a few of them personally. Now, in "An American Procession," his characters are on parade.

"For many years, I had difficulty getting a handle on the central theme," he said. "Once I fixed on the hundred years between 1830 and 1930 as the crucial century in our literature, the book began to fall into place. Its unifying theme is American selfhood — what sustained the father of American literature, Emerson, and continued on down to Hemingway and Fitzgerald. The legendary sense of self in America is a principal element in my narrative. The title derives from a lovely tribute that Whitman paid to Emerson as 'the actual beginner of the whole procession.'" Mr. Kazin pointed out that he reaches beyond literature to American history; his personal interest in Lincoln runs deep and is touched upon several times in the book. He said that Whitman was the only major writer in Lincoln's lifetime who described the 16th President with love.

Among the "characters" Mr. Kazin encountered was John Dos Passos; he first met the author of

"U.S.A." in Provincetown, Mass., in 1942 and they remained friends "despite his right-wing views" in later years. "Theodore Dreiser was pleased with my writing about him — I stuck up for his work," Mr. Kazin said. "In 1945 James T. Farrell and I were named alternate executors of his will." He met T. S. Eliot in wartime London and saw him afterward as well. One of Mr. Kazin's previous books, "Contemporaries," which includes his comments on a number of modern writers, is dedicated to his friends, Elena and Edmund Wilson. Mr. Kazin said the historic sensibilities of Wilson and Van Wyck Brooks had influenced him.

The life and career of Mr. Kazin, who is Distinguished Professor of English at City University's Graduate Center and Hunter College, can almost be summed up in the titles of his books: "Starting Out in the Thirties," "A Walker in the City," "New York Jew" and "On Native Grounds" (an interpretation of modern American prose literature that was recently reissued in a 40th anniversary edition). He first began writing book reviews for The New Republic at 19; he is now 69. "I may be the only person alive who wrote for The Times Book Review nearly a half-century ago," he said. "My idea is that a critic should be a writer, and this is very much a written book."

—Herbert Mitgang

5/13/84

Walt Whitman's legacy: energetic poetry

Is wax recording really poet's voice?

Is it Walt Whitman or is it a hoax? Experts are trying to decide whether it really is the great American poet reading four lines of his verse on a recording.

The snippet was taken from a tape of an NBC radio broadcast of the 1950s in which the announcer said Whitman's voice was preserved on a wax-cylinder recording made in 1890 — two years before his death — which was lost since then.

Although the technology of wax-cylinder recording was known in 1890, there is no record of Whitman's being recorded, and the poet never mentioned it.

► Literary rebel forever freed verse from its Puritanical fetters.

By MARGARIA FICHTNER
of Knight-Ridder Newspapers

By his own admission he was "one of the roughs," a carousing, fleshy sensualist unfettered by prevailing moral attitudes and unbehind to the strictures and traditions of his day.

But by the time he died, 100 years ago, Walt Whitman — the audacious, vehemently self-absorbed singer of the body and soul — had accomplished more than any other American writer before or since.

"He really is the first American poet," says Michael Hettich, assistant professor of English at Miami-Dade Community College and a poet himself. "All later poets

have to define themselves against him."

With the publication in 1855 of the first edition of "Leaves of Grass," his scandalous, eccentric epic masterpiece, Whitman waged literary revolution that may never end. With one stroke, he shattered the prissy Victorian dew that had clung to the neat, romantic images and cadences of his contemporaries and yanked poetry up close and personal. Worse, he shoved it in your face.

"I spring from the pages into your arms," he wrote, his sweep as brash and presumptuous as a new barroom chum whose arm hooks over your shoulder as you wobble companionably home.

In Whitman's hands all rules evaporated. Rhyme was forsaken. Meter was pared to a crafty haphazardness that splashed type across the page in operatic brush strokes and sent words skittering with the blind purposefulness of ants.

Instead of the copybook sorghum of "Give all to love; Obey thy heart," Whitman spewed, "My ties and ballasts leave me, my elbows rest in seagaps, I skirt sierras, my palms cover continents, I am afoot with my vision."

Biblical, Homeric or just plain horrific, he stretched American poetry all the way to its horizons and insisted, "It is not far, it is within reach" and "haste, haste on."

But most of all, Whitman forever defined American verse: It must be physical and energetic. It must be democratic. It must be generous of spirit. It must be universal in vision.

"Unscrew the locks from the doors!" he demanded. "Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!" It is as if he wanted a sign hung on every new poem that ever would be written: open 24 hours, public welcome, no charge. Today, feminists, See WHITMAN, Page 3F ►

WHITMAN:

Poet liberated American verse

► From Page 1F

anti-war protesters, disciples of modern mystical movements and gay-rights activists seeking affirmation and ennoblement find plenty of both in Whitman's works.

"He blew everything apart," says Cheryl Clark, Miami-Dade (Fla.) English professor and Whitman scholar. "He broke open the mold."

For Whitman, the glory of the American poetic spirit lay not only in beauty but also in the chaotic "roughs and beards and space and ruggedness and nonchalance that the world loves," all of it frankly rendered, a spontaneous emotional free-for-all. "Nor will my poems do good only," he warned, "they will do just as much evil, perhaps more. . . ."

Whitman's poetry was sculpted from "bravuras of birds, bustle of growing wheat, gossip of flames, the clack of sticks cooking my meals." It was squeezed from wrestlers slave markets, mice, butcher boys, "the beautiful uncut hair of graves," schooners, sexual organs, the "finer than prayer" odor of armpits, the parrot screech of old age, even the corpse of a suicide sprawled on a bloody floor.

"Through me forbidden voices. Voices of sexes and lusts . . . Voices indecent."

"If we hadn't had a Whitman," says Hettich, "or hadn't invented him, we'd be in sad shape. We needed someone like him to pull us out of our Puritan past."

The good gray poet of the common man simply "made it fashionable to be common," says Clark. "Up until then, there was this high-brow sense of the literary in this country. The Brahmins of New England" — Emerson, Longfellow, Hawthorne — "held court and ruled. He made American democratic literature into something that could hold its own with the literature of the whole world."

Whitman, who spent most of his life in New York and New Jersey and whose street-level world teemed with prostitutes, thieves, saloonkeepers, maimed Civil War veterans and ferrymen, "made it OK," as Clark puts it, "to be a swaggerer on Broadway. He made it OK to drink and brawl, and he made it not only interesting and appealing but noble."

Yet, for decades attention was rare. Emerson, who wrote Whitman a gushing fan letter, called "Leaves of Grass" "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom . . ." Thoreau liked it, too. But Emily Dickinson, the 19th century's other great literary monument, wrote that although she had

not read Whitman's book, she was told "that he was disgraceful." Quaker John Greenleaf Whittier is said to have tossed his copy into the fire. But Hart Crane, William Carlos Williams, Federico Garcia Lorca, D.H. Lawrence and Pablo Neruda all eventually would honor Whitman in their work or align themselves as his disciples.

After Whitman's death, the British writer E.M. Forster annexed the title for his novel "A Passage to India" from one of Whitman's poems, as did Willa Cather for her "O Pioneers!" Another Whitman poem inspired the title for the 1951 Joan Crawford-Robert Young movie "Goodbye, My Fancy." Carly Simon says the inspiration for her Oscar-winning song "Let the River Run" came from "Leaves of Grass."

Yet, "he was not even a feature in American classrooms until about the 1950s," says Peter Schmitt, who teaches Whitman's exhausting "Song of Myself" in his American literature survey course at the University of Miami. "And I find college students don't really respond to him as well as you might think. . . . I think his brashness and his egotistical quality put them off."

But Miami poet Laurence Donovan, who also teaches at the university, says his students think "Whitman's a lot of fun. They like his big, sweeping statements. Whitman sounds like Bob Dylan."



MAN OF MANY WORDS: Some say Walt Whitman, who died 100 years ago, was the quintessential American poet.

Francis Marion Green

“General Grant and his staff then mounted and started for the headquarters camp, which, in the meantime, had been pitched near by. The news of the surrender had reached the Union lines, and the firing of salutes began at several points, but the general sent orders at once to have them stopped, and used these words in referring to the occurrence: ‘The war is over . . . and the best sign of rejoicing after the victory will be to abstain from all demonstrations in the field.’”

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

BY WALT WHITMAN

ON the 14th of April, 1865, President Lincoln was assassinated by the half-crazed John Wilkes Booth. His death came as the last stroke of disaster to the South, for, as Henry Watterson, the distinguished publicist and editor, says:

“The direst blow that could have been laid upon the prostrate South was delivered by the assassin’s bullet that struck him down. He

was the one friend we had at court when friends were most in need."

Every American heart must respond to the keen anguish expressed in these lines by "the good gray poet":

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought
is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and
daring.

But O heart! heart! heart!
Oh, the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up!—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle
trills,
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths—for you the
shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces
turning;

Here, Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor
will,

The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed
and done,

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object
won;

Exult, O shores! and ring, O bells!

But I, with mournful tread,

Walk the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.

REPLEDGING THE SOUTH TO THE UNION

ROBERT E. LEE touched the pinnacle of greatness when, after defeat, he rallied the South to a new pledge of loyalty to the Union. This quoted letter from him is but one of many such addressed to the people whom he had led through the fire of war, and who were ready to follow him still along any path he should choose.

“NEAR CARTERSVILLE, VIRGINIA,
“28th August, 1865.

“HONORABLE JOHN LETCHER, Lexington, Va.

“*My dear Sir:* I was much pleased to hear of your return to your home and to learn by your letter of the 2d of the kindness and con-

sideration with which you were treated during your arrest, and of the sympathy extended to you by your former congressional associates and friends in Washington. The conciliatory manner in which President Johnson spoke of the South must have been particularly agreeable to one who has the interest of its people so much at heart as yourself. I wish that spirit could become more general. It would go far to promote confidence and to calm feelings which have too long existed. The questions which were for years in dispute between the State and general governments, and which unhappily were not decided by the dictates of reason, but referred to the decision of war, having been decided against us, it is the part of wisdom to acquiesce in the result, and of candor to recognize the fact.

"The interests of the State are, therefore, the same as those of the United States. Its prosperity will rise or fall with the welfare of the country. The duty of its citizens, then, appears to me too plain to admit of doubt. All should unite in honest efforts to obliterate the effects of war, and to restore the blessings of

WHITMAN BECOMES RESPECTABLE

At last Walt Whitman, whose "Leaves of Grass" shocked readers of a generation ago and called down upon him the ire of Anthony Comstock and other authorities on what constitutes safe literature for young people, has been made respectable. This has been done by placing his bust in the Hall of Fame among those of other American immortals and on his birthday, May 31, a plaque will be unveiled at the site of his little Brooklyn print shop in which he set the type for the printing of some of his first poems. In the Hall of Fame ceremonies Edwin Markham took an important part by reading a poem on Whitman specially written for the occasion.

Walt Whitman died in 1892 at the age of 73. He received little recognition from his American contemporaries, partly because of what they considered his salacious tendency and also because his was the freest of free verse. Whittier threw a copy of "Leaves of Grass" into a blazing fireplace. Lanier sneered at Whitman's product as "raw collops cut from the rump of poetry." The poems so disgusted Secretary of the Interior Harlan that he dismissed their author from a government clerkship.

We had to go away from home to learn that Walt Whitman was a poetic genius of the first order. European critics praised his work very highly on his death and in France his passing was regretted as that of America's poetic primate. Although his primacy never has been conceded by our leading critics, the European eulogies of Whitman made them read "Leaves of Grass" a little more carefully and some of them came to the conclusion that they had

Memories of President Lincoln

WALT WHITMAN

1

*When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.*

*Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.*

6

*With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you journey,
With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.*



James Earl Jones reading from "Memories of President Lincoln" by Walt Whitman. The head of Abraham Lincoln by Augustus Saint Gaudens is on extended loan in the New York State Theater. The ceremony took place at the New York City Ballet's Bicentennial Gala on May 12, 1976.



O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

WALT WHITMAN
1819-1892

O Captain! My Captain! is thought by many to be our greatest Lincoln poem. At the crest of the wave of exultation that overspread the North on Lee's surrender, April 9, 1865, came news of the world's most fearful assassination.



THE LAST PICTURE OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won;
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths—for you the shores
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For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here, Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done:
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won:

Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
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Walk the deck my Captain lies,
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LIEUTENANT
ROBERT DEAN BASS

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WALT WHITMAN

LINCOLN AND WHITMAN

WHY don't you reprint "O Captain! My Captain!" in your February, or Lincoln, number?" is the substance of so many requests we have received from all parts of the country that we cheerfully answer with the following notable tribute paid the

martyr President by the poet-philosopher, Walt Whitman. How many magazine readers to-day are familiar with these verses that stirred the nation profoundly a generation or more ago?

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

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The Martyred Presidents: *In Memoriam*

LINCOLN—1865.

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—Walt Whitman.

(This is the remarkable poem in which, on May
6, 1865, London Punch confessed its error, after
having for four years lampooned Lincoln with pen-
cil and with pen:)

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
You, who with mocking pencil went to trace,
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face,

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling
hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please.

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's
laugh,
Judging each step, as though the way were plain;
Reckless, so it could point a paragraph,
Of Chief's perplexity, or people's pain.

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding sheet
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scurril-jester, is there room for you?

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil, and confute my pen—
To make me own this hind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true born king of men.

My shallow judgment I had learnt to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose,
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more
true,
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows.

How humble yet how hopeful he could be;
How in good fortune and in ill the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work—such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand—
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace
command;

Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instruments to work His will,
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude nature's thwarting
mights—

The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron-bark, that turns the laborer's axe,
The rapid that o'erbears the boatman's toil,
The prairie, hiding the mazed wanderer's tracks.

The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear—
Such were the needs that helped his youth to
train;

Rough culture—but such trees large fruit may
bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it; four long-suffering years'
Ill-fate, ill-fortune, ill-report, lived through,
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers,

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering mood;
Till, as he came on light, from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he
stood

A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest—
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to
rest!

The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good-will to men.

O Captain! My Captain!

By WALT WHITMAN

(1865)

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While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

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